



Springfield
Conservation
Nature Center



Harbinger

MAY and JUNE 2006 VOL 20 NO 3

More Than Just

Floating, fishing, or swimming in clear, fast-moving streams and creeks in the Ozarks have been summer pastimes for generations. Fishing for goggle-eye (rock bass), sunfish, or smallmouth bass has provided hours of entertainment. However, on your next trip to the creek take along a mask and snorkel and visit the world that exists just under the surface of the water—a world that is beautiful, diverse, and just begging to be explored and observed. Here, you'll find more than just "minners."

While game fish are familiar to many, upon closer inspection you will notice the other little fish that inhabit our scenic streams. More than 200 species of fish call Missouri home. Some of these marvelous little fish are found only in the cool, clear, fast-moving streams in the Ozarks. They are often unnoticed and unappreciated; however, they have interesting behavior to observe and coloration that rivals tropical fish especially in the peak of the spawning season.

Numerous other small fish such as minnows, darters, sculpins, longear sunfish, madtoms, goggle-eye, and many others can be observed with the aid of a mask and snorkel. These little fish can be found in stream riffles and shallow pools.

The Niangua darter, for example, is only found in north-flowing tributary streams of the Osage River in Missouri. During the spawning season, the males are adorned in brilliant blues, reds, and golds. Prior to spawning, females will perform a rapid head-bobbing display and then cover themselves with gravel, leaving only their heads and tails exposed. The orangethroat darter will change into brilliant hues of orange and blue during the spawning season. Sometimes orangethroat darter fry (young) will be found inhabiting smallmouth bass nests. They benefit from the protection of the larger smallmouth bass guarding its own nest.



"Minners"!

of red with lemon-yellow fins and tail as it approaches spawning season. Central stonerollers and hornyhead chubs offer a visual delight as you view them in their native habitat.

Longear sunfish are brilliant blue-green speckled with yellow or orange. Along the front of the longear's head are bright sky-blue lines. These little guys can be fed worms from your hand while snorkeling. When you are in their underwater world, they seem more curious than afraid of you. They will often swim up to snorkelers to see what has invaded their space.

So grab the mask and snorkel and take time to visit the aquatic underwater world that exists just below your canoe. You will be amazed at the diversity, coloration, and behaviors of these often overlooked, yet cool little fish that are more than just "minners!"

Sculpins, prehistoric in appearance, can be found clinging to the bottom or with their heads sticking out from under a rock and appearing nearly invisible until they move. The three species of sculpins in Missouri are the banded, Ozark, and mottled sculpins. All sculpins tend to have flattened heads and large pectoral fins found on each side of the body near the head.

The southern redbelly dace, a minnow, turns a brilliant shade

The View From The Bridge

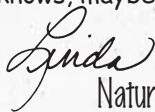
In this age of technology when youth often spend time on computers experiencing reality *virtually*, rather than with *hands-on* activities, it's not surprising that more young people are recruited to technological careers than to the field of conservation. Let's face it, conservation work can be tough. Working outdoors requires facing the reality of heat, ticks, chiggers, mosquitoes, and poison ivy rather than the virtual threats of asteroids or aliens encountered in a computer or video game, but the rewards are *real*.

The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) has a long history of recruiting teens, ages 16-18, to experience conservation work through an eight-week summer program beginning in mid-June and continuing through early August. Crews of six teens work five days a week, Monday through Friday, for eight hours a day and earn money. This summer, the Missouri Department of Conservation will sponsor the first team in this region. This team is led by a trained crew member and reports directly to John Hinkle, Project Coordinator with the Conservation Department. Participants were recruited locally from a variety of economic and ethnic backgrounds through the Missouri Career Center and selected after a panel interview.

The goal of the YCC is to foster an understanding of the environment through educational opportunities and hands-on work experiences. Our local YCC team will remove nonnative plants at the nature center, paint privies at the fishing access at Springfield Lake, learn about rearing fish at Chesapeake Fish Hatchery, and work on the grounds at Bois D'Arc Conservation Area to name just a few projects. The teams will also receive regular conservation lessons, participate in team-building activities, and enjoy recreational benefits like learning to shoot trap and skeet, for instance, at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center.

So if you notice a group of teenagers off the trails this summer at the nature center, they won't be breaking the rules. Instead, this dedicated crew will be improving habitat to benefit wildlife. Removing invasive Japanese honeysuckle, Johnson grass, and musk thistle will help native plants thrive; cutting back poison ivy from the trail edge will reduce the chance that visitors will accidentally brush against the plant; and placing logs in the lake will provide basking sites for turtles.

It's a win-win situation. Kids get a real taste of conservation work and the Conservation Department and everyone who uses the areas we manage benefit from their hard work. Undoubtedly, each crew member will also see the outcome of their labor which might inspire several to look seriously at a future career in conservation. Who knows, maybe they will discover that annihilating invasive plants can be just as challenging as blasting aliens, with results that are far more rewarding.

 Linda F. Chorice
Nature Center Manager

The Nature Nook Gift Shop



**20%
Off**

May/June
Featured
Publication

Missouri Bird Calls CD

Learn to identify the calls of 192 birds you might hear in Missouri with this collection of recordings by Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Discounted price: \$6.40 plus tax.
Heritage card discount does not apply.

New In The Nook

The Nature Nook has received an assortment of nature sounds CDs.

Check these out on your next visit.



Temporary Displays

May

Jim Rathert: Still Behind The Lens
A Collection of Personal Photographs
from Missouri and Beyond

June

Outdoor Writers Association of
America Traveling Photo Exhibit

Thank You

The nature center would like to thank Bill Kastler and Wild Birds Unlimited for the bird seed, suet, and suet feeder; John W. Newman for the historic wildlife code books and posters; and Mark Seecy and Alan Kastler for the natural objects. We appreciate all of you!

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). The area is open daily 8am to 9pm from March 1 to October 31, and 8am to 6pm during the remainder of the year. The building is open daily from 8am to 5pm year 'round. The building and area are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.

Phone: 417/888-4237 Fax: 417/888-4241 <www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/springfd>

ASK The Naturalist



Seasonal changes spark many questions. In this section, we answer some common questions about natural events.

What do I do with my old fishing line?

Fishing line can be a hazard to wildlife and should be properly disposed. Monofilament line and the spools on which it's sold cannot be recycled through traditional recycling centers. However, there are recycling drop boxes at many tackle shops and marinas as well as at the nature center. Old line and spools are used to make other plastic products such as tackle boxes or fish habitats.

When is the free fishing weekend?

Free Fishing Days are held the first Saturday and Sunday following the first Monday of June each year in Missouri (June 10 and 11 this year). Any person may fish without a fishing permit, a trout permit, and an area daily trout tag during Free Fishing Days.

Are the fish in Missouri safe to eat?

The contaminants in fish are evaluated every year to make sure they are safe to eat. The good news is that most Missouri fish are safe for most people to eat. However, while Missouri has seen a slow decrease in pesticides and PCBs in fish tissue, there are elevated levels of methylmercury, a concern for pregnant or nursing women and children under the age of 13. For more information on recommended restrictions, please see "A Summary of Missouri Fishing Regulations" available at MDC offices or on the MDC website.



Recycled fishing line and spools benefit wildlife.

Recycling bin available at the nature center.

Chipping In . . . Carmen Hallock

Not too many pleasant thoughts come to mind when you think of dark places, isolation, and unfamiliar languages. In fact, most people tend to stay clear of such places and situations because they feel out of their comfort zones. On the other hand, someone like Volunteer Naturalist Carmen Hallock seeks out these very circumstances. Her inquisitive mind draws her toward these unfamiliar, foreign places.



A favorite hobby of hers is crawling through and exploring caves. Carmen first became involved with the nature center by participating in wilderness hikes and caving trips. She soon joined the volunteer ranks in 2003 where she became involved in assisting with hikes and other field trips. Her outgoing personality sheds light on those unfamiliar places and uncomfortable situations, such as in a cave. This makes everyone feel welcome and comfortable when they might otherwise feel out of their comfort zones.

After teaching middle school for two years and becoming a photographer, she and her husband, Ken, joined the Peace Corps in November 2003 and served two years in Nicaragua. Carmen first learned the native Spanish language and then began teaching environmental science for fourth through sixth grades, reforestation projects with secondary students, and reading for kindergarten through third grades. An unfamiliar country, a different culture, a new language, and no running water in a small village might intimidate some, but to Carmen it quickly became home. She developed strong bonds with her host family, new friends, and her students.

Upon returning to the United States, she quickly resumed her volunteer duties and remained physically active by training for the annual Ozark Adventure Race. A grueling eight- to twelve-hour race through the Mark Twain National Forests appeared to be a new challenge that was right up her alley.

Her interests are wide and her comfort zone boundaries are even greater. Carmen also enjoys exploring wilderness areas, canoeing, fishing, and trying new activities like shooting trap and skeet. She seeks out new challenges and enjoys sharing these new experiences with others. So, the next time you're on a field trip to a local wilderness area, in a dark cave, or in unfamiliar territory with Carmen, please thank her for shedding light on the situation and for chipping in.

Volunteer Milestones

Sandy Corby	2500 Hours	Carmen Hallock	200 Hours
Art Daniels	750 Hours	Sheryl Heun	200 Hours
Doug Gilliam	750 Hours	Gregg Krumme	100 Hours
Joyce Tolliver	750 Hours	Louis Rousselot	100 Hours
Linda Brown	400 Hours	Carol Snyder	100 Hours

Kids' Fishing Fun Day

Saturday, June 3, 8am-Noon

Sportsman's Park (2500 E. Kearney)

Kids love fishing! And here's a great chance for your child to have fun while learning more about fishing. Children, ages 3 to 13, will get the opportunity to fish in a specially-stocked pond.

Participants need to bring their own equipment and bait. **Preregister for a fishing time** at either Bass Pro Shops or the nature center.

Check out the website for additional details:

<www.MissouriConservation.org>.

All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Kids' Fishing Day

Saturday, May 20, 6:30am-8:15pm

**Roaring River Hatchery
& State Park**

Call 417/847-2430 for details.

Kids' Fishing Day

Saturday, May 13

6:30am-8:15pm

**Bennett Spring Hatchery
& State Park**

Call 417/532-4418
for details.

Family Fishing Fair

Saturday, June 10

10am-2pm

**Shepherd of the Hills
Fish Hatchery**

Call 417/334-4865
for details.

**Free Fishing Weekend
June 10-11**



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MAY EVENTS

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER



Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after May 1 to register for May programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

4 Butterflies Of The Bird World

Thursday, 7-8pm

May is an excellent time to see migrating warblers in Missouri. These “butterflies” of the bird world don’t stay here long. Learn to identify these passing warblers during this indoor program with Volunteer Naturalist Charley Burwick. Ages 12-adult. *Registration begins April 15.*

6 Conservation TEEN Club: Caving

Saturday, 8:30am-3:30pm

Beat the heat with an underground retreat! We have been given permission to explore the large gated cave at Fuson Conservation Area which is home to beautiful formations and endangered bats. Bring two flashlights and wear boots and clothes you can get muddy. Lunch and transportation will be provided. Ages 12-17. Registration required.

Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

Saturday, 9-11am

Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike on the trails. Families.



The Art Of Woodcarving

Saturday, 10-11am

Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they teach carving techniques and show how to transform wood into works of art. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

Woodcarving Demonstration

Saturday, 10am-4pm

Drop by anytime to visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the “wood-be” carver, demonstrate carving techniques, show works in progress, and sell some of their art pieces.

7 For Adults Only: Caving

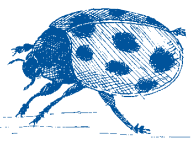
Sunday, 9am-4pm

Exploring caves or spelunking is always an adventure. Join us as we venture into Big Smittle Cave at nearby Fuson Conservation Area. Though access is usually restricted because the cave houses maternity colonies of the endangered gray bat, we have obtained a permit to explore the cave during a time when the bats won’t be disturbed. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Inquire about special instructions when you call to register. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

10 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11-11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2-6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.



11 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Mothers

Thursday, 11-11:45am or 6-6:45pm

Mothers, we celebrate you during the month of May (and always). Bring your children, ages 0-2, for a guided nature walk. Bring a stroller and join the fun! Registration required.

12 The Journey Of Lewis & Clark York’s Perspective

Friday, 7-8pm

Retired Conservation Department Education Consultant Willie Lyles brings York, Captain William Clark’s slave, to life in his first-person portrayal of the man who accompanied Lewis & Clark on their famed journey to the Pacific Ocean and back. Besides Sacagawea, York was the only participant of the crew who was neither enlisted nor hired; his participation was mandatory which made his perspective of the journey unique. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

13 Super Scout Saturday

Saturday, 10am-4pm

Attention: Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors; Tigers, Wolves, Bears, and Webelos; Camp Fire USA; and Royal Rangers.

Here’s an opportunity for the groups listed above to have fun learning while earning nature-oriented badges. Stations set up throughout the building will provide information and/or activities that will satisfy certain requirements for various badges. Mix and match stations to complete as many requirements as you like.



14 Primitive Skills Series Flint Knapping

Sunday, 1-3pm

Volunteer Naturalist and primitive skills specialist Don Brink returns. Watch him transform simple rocks into artistic and functional points similar to the ones used by early man for arrowheads and other tools. See the basics of flint knapping and try your hand at this age-old skill. Stop by anytime.

18 Hiking Club

Thursday, 6-10pm

Ozark Greenways has miles of established trails throughout Springfield. On this hike, we’ll travel four miles along the South Creek Greenway. Hike is easy to moderate. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

19 The Call Of The Wild With Ralph Duren

Friday, 7-8pm

People across the country know that retired Missouri Conservation Department employee Ralph Duren can call turkeys—he’s a national champion. However, he can imitate nearly 75 other kinds of wildlife. Come hear him mimic and talk about the wildlife he knows so well. Families. Registration required.

21 Summer Hummers

Sunday, 5-6:30pm

Hummingbirds have returned to the Ozarks! Join bird bander Sarah Driver as she talks about hummingbirds and attempts to capture and band some. Families. Registration required.

VIDEOS ARE SHOWN
EVERY SUNDAY
FROM 2-3pm.

23 Conservation Kids’ Club Frontier Facts and Fables

Tuesday, 6:30-7:45pm

Meet Grady Manus, an 1820s trapper and subsistence hunter. He will give us an up-close look at the tools, clothes, firearms, and accouterments (other stuff) used to survive and make an honest living on the frontier. Ages 7-12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

26 Hunter Education

Friday, 6-9pm and Saturday, 8am-5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. This course is continued on Saturday from 8am to 5pm (lunch break given—lunch not provided). You must pass a written test to be certified. Ages 11-adult. Students under 15 years of age must be accompanied by an adult and bring proof of age. *Call today to register.*

30 Canoeing Basics

Tuesday, 7-9pm

What better way to navigate your way through the Ozarks than by water? Gain your confidence in maneuvering a canoe by attending this hands-on workshop. We’ll cover different paddling strokes and steering techniques. Then, you’ll get a chance to practice your new skills and maneuver a canoe. Canoes, paddles, and life vests provided. Dress appropriately and be prepared to get wet. Meet at the Southwood Access on Lake Springfield. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit LITTLE ACORNS programs to one per month. Registration required.

Roly-Poly Roundup

Hey, partners, join the roly-poly fun as Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan returns for this year’s roundup!

Friday, May 12, 11am or 1pm

Hail The Snail And Hug A Slug

Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan returns to shell out a slug of facts about these creatures known for their silvery, slimy trails.

Thursday, May 18, 11am or 1pm

Slithery Snakes

Kids, slither on in and get up close and personal with nature’s most misunderstood reptile.

Thursday, May 25, 11am or 1:30pm

Saturday, May 27, 11am



JUNE EVENTS

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER



Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after June 1 to register for June programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

3 Hiking Club

Saturday, 8am-4:30pm
Join Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik for a hike at Hercules Glade Wilderness. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately five miles and of moderate difficulty. Ages 18-adult. *Registration begins May 15.*

Trail Trivia

Saturday, 9am-4pm
Spend a couple hours hiking and testing your nature knowledge to celebrate National Trails Day! In lieu of *Hiked It . . . Liked It!*, trek our trails and answer nature-related questions along the way. Stop by the nature center anytime to pick up your booklet and then return to check answers and claim your prize. Families.

Walleye Fishing

Saturday, 4:30-9:30pm
Don't miss your chance to catch this elusive nocturnal fish with walleye angler Steve Johnson. We will start at the nature center for an introduction to walleye and then carpool to Bull Shoals Lake. You can bring your own gear or it will be provided. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

4 Venomous Snakes Of Missouri

Sunday, 2-3pm
You've heard the tales about them, now's your chance to learn the truth. We'll explore the myths and realities of Missouri's misunderstood pit vipers. Families.

Venomous Snakes On Display

Sunday, 3-4pm
Come see live specimens of Missouri's venomous snakes on display courtesy of Finley Valley Serpentarium. Stop by anytime.

6 Tree Pest Clinic

Tuesday, 9am-1pm
Do your trees have disease or insect problems? Bring infected twigs (at least 15" long), branches, or leaves to Urban Foresters for identification and a solution to your tree problems. Stop by anytime.

9 Nocturnal Animals Puppet Show

Friday, 7-7:45pm
Hoots, squeaks, howls, and chirps make up the music of the night. In the darkness, these strange animal noises can sound scary. Wear your pajamas (if you want) and join us as we shed some light on these nighttime noisemakers to learn a little about what goes on outdoors when the sun goes down. Families. Registration required.

10 Nocturnal Animals Puppet Show

Saturday, 11-11:45am or 1:30-2:15pm
Hoots, squeaks, howls, and chirps make up the music of the night. In the darkness, these strange animal noises can sound scary. Wear your pajamas (if you want) and join us as we shed some light on these nighttime noisemakers to learn a little about what goes on outdoors when the sun goes down. Families. Registration required.

11 Primitive Skills Series Fire and Flintstone

Sunday, 1-3pm
Volunteer Specialist Don Brink returns to demonstrate how to start fires without matches and butane. Different primitive fire-making techniques will be demonstrated. Afterwards, try your hand at starting a fire the primitive way. Ages 12-adult. Registration required

12 Conservation TEEN Club Camping At Schell-Osage

Monday, 1pm to Tuesday, 3:30pm
Spend an evening at the wetlands of Schell-Osage Conservation Area. There are thousands of acres of marshes and lakes that serve as a refuge for waterfowl, shorebirds, and more. We'll learn about the management of the refuge and perhaps cast a line for fish. Additional information will be mailed to the participants. Ages 12-17. Registration required.

14 Firefly Frolic

Wednesday, 8-9pm
Fireflies have intrigued and fascinated children and adults on countless summer evenings. Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan to learn everything you ever wanted to know about nature's "flashlights." Bring your flashlight and join the fun. Families. Registration required.

15 Minnows And More

Thursday, 7-8pm
Have you ever been floating or swimming and wondered what all those little fish were that were swimming around your ankles? Learn more about streams and how to identify these cool little fish by attending this program. Ages 8-adult. Registration required.

17 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Fathers

Saturday, 11-11:45am
Fathers (and other favorite Big People), celebrate your special day with your children, ages 0-2, on a guided nature stroll. Bring a stroller and enjoy some special time outside with your babies! Registration required.

22 For Adults Only Fly-Fishing For Bluegill

Thursday, 6-9pm
Fly-fishing isn't just for trout! Here's your chance to learn basic fly-fishing techniques while catching bluegill on a pond at Bois D'Arc Conservation Area. Bring your fishing license, drinking water, and your lucky hat! We'll carpool from the nature center or you can meet us at the pond. Fishing equipment will be provided. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

24 Taking Snapshots Of Bugs And Things

Saturday, 1-4pm
Ever tried to take eye-popping pictures of butterflies or spiders? Then you know how difficult that can be. Volunteer Naturalist Bob Ball will show you how to get up close and personal with these small creatures during this indoor/outdoor photography program. A camera with macro close-up capabilities and a flash required. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

25 Summer Hummers

Sunday, 5-6:30pm
Although hummingbirds may be a bit busy and out of sight during their current mating and nesting season, you can still enjoy an evening with Sarah Driver as she shares her knowledge about Missouri's smallest bird and attempts to capture and band some. Families. Registration required.

26 Tree Pest Clinic

Monday, 2-5pm
Do your trees have disease or insect problems? Bring infected twigs (at least 15" long), branches, or leaves to Urban Foresters for identification and a solution to your tree problems. Stop by anytime.

27 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Summer

Tuesday, 11-11:45am or 6-6:45pm
Summer breezes make us feel fine as we go on a guided nature stroll to introduce you and your favorite 0-2 year old to the sweet days of summer. Bring a stroller. Registration required.

Conservation Kids' Club Lions And Tigers And Bears, Oh My!

Tuesday, 7-8:15pm
While ant lions, tiger beetles, and woolly bears are real, they are nothing to fear. In fact, there's little to fear in the great outdoors, but there are a few things to avoid. Learn all about poison ivy, ticks, chiggers, and other outdoor hazards during this indoor program and outdoor hike. Ages 7-12 only. (Please, only one adult per group of kids.) Registration required.



**Ms. Ladybug is on vacation.
She will return in July
for another story time.**

LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **LITTLE ACORNS** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Nature's Nightlights

Summer evenings will be filled with magic and fun when your little ones discover fireflies with Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan.

Tuesday, June 6, 11am or 1pm
Registration begins May 15

Bigmouth Bullfrogs

From tadpoles to adult bullfrogs, we'll learn the life changes that frogs go through and why they are such good leapers.

Friday, June 16, 11am or 1:30pm
Saturday, June 17, 11am

Sprouting Seeds

It's sprouting time! Join us as we discover how seeds are moved from place to place and what they need to grow. You will even get to plant a seed of your own!

Thursday, June 29, 6:30pm
Friday, June 30, 11am or 1:30pm